Richard Althorp: Specialist Software Services and Oxygen Service Desk

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Until three months ago Richard Althorp ran E-Warehouse an independent software vendor who developed, ran and supported the Oxygen Service Desk product set. This all changed after acquisition by Specialist Software Services <http://www.specialistsoftwareservices.com/> who bought them to get access to this product set to use in their software asset management business; more of that at another time!

Oxygen Service Desk <http://www.oxygenhelpdesk.co.uk/> is a service desk tool that has existed for 12 years was the first software as a service (SaaS) service desk product and now comes in 3 iterations. The basic version Oxygen Express is a helpdesk and ticketing system aimed at the SME market. Followed by Oxygen Team aimed at the medium enterprise space with its own email facility, a self-service portal allowing users to create an monitor their own tickets and includes Active Directory. The Oxygen Enterprise Suite takes the facilities of Oxygen Team and adds the Oxygen API allowing web services to be incorporated plus integration services that in turn facilitate other software products to work in concert with the system. The Oxygen Enterprise Suite is a broad tool for automating business processes such as HR, facilities and customer services in addition to the basic helpdesk and ticketing such tools deliver as primary functions. It can also be integrated with other tools such as Salesforce.com <http://www.salesforce.com>. The particular functionality that interested Specialist Software Services is the capacity to take feeds from other software asset management tools; again, more of that at another time!

Another reason for Specialist Software Services interest was the success of the product. Blue chip clients include Virgin Holidays, Dominos Pizza, Liquid Telecommunications <http://www.liquidtelecom.com/>, Utility Warehouse <https://www.utilitywarehouse.co.uk/>. Oxygen is ITIL ready, so can be made to follow the ITIL framework. This is an important distinction to draw as ITIL (the Information Technology Infrastructure Library) is a set of guidelines drawn up by the British government that businesses should follow. Service desk products, Oxygen included, do not confer compliance with this framework in and of themselves; instead they provide a structure into which the processes that make up ITIL may be integrated.

Oxygen <http://www.oxygenhelpdesk.co.uk/> fits very well with the Managed Service Expert <http://www.managedserviceexpert.com/> ethos being SaaS and/or cloud based – it can be bought as licences operated from the client’s own data centres, effectively from a private cloud. There is great deal more to say about the purchase of the business by Specialist Software Services <http://www.specialistsoftwareservices.com/> and their cloud based software asset management product set but Richard was keen to keep that as a separate discussion and so will need to wait for the New Year when we will be looking at this in a lot more detail.